

SEMINAR ON THE PROVISION OF HEALTH
SERVICES FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

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COUNTRY REPORT ON PRE-SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES
IN IRAQ

by

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Iraq is a developing Country has initiated a development Planning for the first time in 1951 by the creation of the development Board which is being resolved after four years work, from 1955 to 1967 there was a temporary investment plan which is followed by two 5 years development plan 1965-1969 & 1970-1974 and a third 5 years plan for 1975 to 1980 which is in preparation.

In this development plan they paid a great attention to Health side especially Health Services for the pre-school children. The Pre-school age children amount about 20% of the population which is according to the last estimation in 1975 is ten Millions.

HEALTH SERVICES:

I. Maternity and Child Health/Family Planning Centres

The first MCH Centre was established in 1953 in Baghdad the Capital with the assistance of WHO and UNICEF.

In 1956 the Ministry of Health assumed a full responsibility to the Centre and established new centres which become later on 190 throughout the country, 15 centres in Baghdad and 75 centres in the remaining Governorates.

The MCH Centre serving the Urban Population of six millions. In addition to these centres there are MCH Sections in each of the Rural Health Centre serving the rate of population, therefore, as we see MCH Services is covering 75% of the population.

The Staff of the MCH Centre include G.P. or Paediatricians, one or more Health Visitors, Vaccinators, Nurses and Medical Assistants.

MCH Centre care for preschool children 0-6 years. The Number of Infants (0-1) visited the centres for the first time 1977 (61303)

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and the total attendances of these infants were (337500).

The Number of the children (1-6) who visited the centres for the first time were (130260) the total attendance of these children (308300).

MCH centres and sections in Iraq look after:

1. follow-up^{of} the rate of growth development in babies trying to ensure a normal physical and mental development.
2. Protection of pre-school children from infectious diseases by doing all sort of vaccinations:

BCG

DPT

Polio

Smallpox

Typhoid and sometimes Cholera.

BCG is being done for all new born babies in the first week of life and no birth certificates are supplied before doing the BCG vaccination.

The number of the pre-school children vaccinated in the MCH centre during 1977 is BCG 60100 and DPT 50150, smallpox 20000 and Typhoid 500.

MCH centres also take all other measures of prevention and control of these diseases.

3. Secure suitable nutrition and this is done through Health Education to mothers as well as supplying them with milk, vitamins and other items of valuable food (all free of charge).

Health Education is carried out in the MCH centres in all its forms and degrees (individual, group education and home visiting). The child care in each MCH clinic is held four times per week, with the average of 80-100 pre-school children are checked per session which amount to a total of about two thousands in each centre per month.

Home visiting is regarded to be very necessary in Iraq, in the last few years owing to the inability of the employed mothers to attend the MCH centres. These home visits are conducted by the Health Visitors at a rate of 100 visits per month.

5. Health records and appointment system.

The family Planning was established for the first time in Iraq between 1970-1972 by the assistance of WHO to the MCH Centre already established in my country, but for the Family Planning Project has been terminated.

RURAL HEALTH CENTRES :

The Rural Health Foundation was established in 1963 but the first centre was established in 1965 at Abu-Graib (Baghdad Suburb) and then spreaded throughout all the Governorates according to our population ratio.

The Number of the Rural Health Centres reach to two thousands centres at Nahiyeh and three pilot Health Centres for training Rural Health workers. In addition to that there are 650 Health Branches at Villages and 200 Mobiles teams

The main services of the Rural Centres are summarized as follows:

1. MCH Services.
2. Environmental Services.
3. Treatment of various kinds of diseases.
4. Opening Orientation Course for training non-official Midwives on Midwifery affairs, and training different categories of auxiliary Health Personnel required for the Rural Health Centres.

These Orientation Courses are carried on in the pilot centres which are found, one at Abu-Graib the second in Basrah and the third in Mosul.

5. Registration of birth and death and other health statistics.

CLINICS FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE:

In Iraq there are no special clinics for Children under 5 years of age but there are polyclinics for all ages.

DISPENSARIES:

There are few numbers of Dispensaries run by Health Officials but nowadays the polyclinics replace them.

MATERNITY & CHILDREN HOSPITAL - OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENTS :

There are ten Maternity Hospitals spreaded in the most important cities of our country. Total beds in these Hospitals are 1150 beds.

In addition to these Maternity Hospitals there are Maternity Units in the General Hospitals, the total beds in these units are about 2150 beds. At each of these Maternity Hospitals and General Hospitals there is an outpatient Clinic receiving patients during 24 Hours service. Moreover, there are four Maternity Hospitals run by private sectors namely; Al-Samarai Hospital, Ar-Razi, Red Crescent and Al-Haidari Maternity Hospital of about 200 beds and all of these hospitals are in Baghdad.

CHILDREN HOSPITALS:

In Iraq there are 15 Paediatric Hospitals of 1800 beds distributed in the different parts of Iraq, and 1000 Paediatric beds distributed in the general Hospitals and to each of these Paediatric and General Hospitals an outpatient Department is attached.

There are no Paediatrics Hospitals run by private sector, in addition to that there are pre-mature and neonate units also attached to the most of the Maternity Hospitals and Units.

FAMILY SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL/EDUCATIONAL SERVICES: CRECHES, DAY-CARE NURSERIES

Day-Care Nurseries and Creches are not very common in Iraq, however, there are 25 Nurseries in Baghdad and 6 in some other big cities, Mosul 2, Kirkuk 1, Sulaimaniya 1, some of these Nurseries are run by private Organizations and others by Governmental Establishments, all of these Nurseries provide day-care but only one nursery provides 24 hours care that is Z'afarani Nursery. The need for these Nurseries increases day after day due to the steadily increasing number of mothers in profession and labour work.

The five years plan 1975-1980 the Ministry of Social Affairs is going to establish 50 day-care nurseries as well as 24 hours care nurseries and creches for founders, Orphans, for children of prisoners and for children of retired parents of low-income.

Some of these nurseries are going to be attached to the Factories and will be for the children whose parents are working in these factories.

KINDERGARTENS:

The number of Kindergartens in Iraq now is 179,76 of them are in Baghdad while the others are in the big cities. Some of these are run by Governmental Establishments while others are run by voluntary and private sectors. The total number of children in these kindergartens is 16874 of both sexes (boys and girls) of nearly equal ratio. The kindergartens care for children of 3-6 years of age. The last study proved that those children who go to the kindergartens before going to the Primary Schools without having the chance of going to the kindergartens first. All the kindergartens in Iraq, those run by the private sector are being nationalized this year.

NUTRITION REHABILITATION AND MOTHER-CRAFT CENTRES:

Nutrition rehabilitation centres established in some of the big MCH Centres in Baghdad. At present there are three centres run co-operatively by both MCH Departments and Nutrition Institute. In these centres mothers are taught practically and educated well to the best suitable and valuable kind of food to their babies.

Mothercraft is taught in all MCH Centres by giving lessons to expectants and nursing mothers, these lessons are carried out regularly daily covering all aspects of nutrition, baby health and care.

SERVICES FOR THE HANDICAPPED PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN:

The socially, Physically and Mentally Handicapped Pre-school children are cared for by their parents and up till now no facilities are available in Iraq for these handicapped to provide them with the care needed.

In Iraq there is only one Institute for Mentally retarded children, one centre for deaf-mutes and one for blind, the first two were established by the Ministry of Interior and the third one established by the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs.

All these Institutions accept children after the pre-school age, but in the five years plan 1975-1980 the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs is taking in consideration the question of these handicapped (Social, Mental and Physical) Pre-school children by means of establishing a more suitable centres for them and to rehabilitated to an occupational ability.